

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1 1. A contents management system in which a playback device  
2 plays an encrypted content stored on a portable recording  
3 medium, using a decryption key acquired from a management  
4 device, comprising:

5       the management device, which holds the decryption key  
6 for decrypting the encrypted content in correspondence with  
7 disclosure information relating to disclosure of the  
8 encrypted content, refers to the disclosure information and  
9 judges, when a request is received from the playback device,  
10 whether disclosure of the encrypted content is permitted,  
11 and transmits the decryption key to the playback device if  
12 judged that disclosure is permitted;

13       the recording medium, which stores the encrypted  
14 content encrypted using an encryption key, and a key request  
15 program for requesting the management device for the  
16 decryption key; and

17       the playback device, which reads from the recording  
18 medium and executes the key request program, receives the  
19 decryption key from the management device, reads from the  
20 recording medium and decrypts the encrypted content using  
21 the decryption key, and plays the decrypted content.

1 2'. The contents management system of claim 1, wherein

2       the management device stores, as disclosure  
3 information, period information showing at least one of a  
4 disclosure start date and a disclosure end date, and judges  
5 whether disclosure of the content is permitted according to  
6 the period information.

1   3. The contents management system of claim 2, wherein

2       the playback device includes:

3       a key request program executing unit operable to read  
4 from the recording medium and execute the key request  
5 program;

6       a key receiving unit operable to receive the decryption  
7 key from the management device;

8       a content reading unit operable to read the encrypted  
9 content from the recording medium; and

10      a playback unit operable to decrypt the encrypted  
11 content using the decryption key and playback the decrypted  
12 content, and

13      the management device includes:

14      a key storage unit storing the decryption key;

15      a disclosure information storage unit storing the  
16 period information as disclosure information;

17      a disclosure judging unit operable to receive the  
18 request from the playback device, and to refer to the period

19 information and judge whether disclosure of the encrypted  
20 content is permitted; and

21 a key transmitting unit operable, if judged that  
22 disclosure is permitted, to transmit the decryption key to  
23 the playback device.

1 4. The contents management system of claim 2, further  
2 comprising a manager device used by a manager of the system,  
3 wherein

4 the manager device receives update information used for  
5 updating the period information and transmits the received  
6 update information to the management device, and

7 the management device receives the update information  
8 from the manager device and updates the period information  
9 according to the received update information.

1 5. The contents management system of claim 2, further  
2 comprising a manager device used by a manager of the system,  
3 wherein

4 the management device, on receipt of a request from the  
5 playback device, generates historical information that  
6 includes a user identifier which uniquely identifies a user  
7 using the playback device, and a content identifier which  
8 uniquely identifies the encrypted content, and stores the

9 generated historical information,

10 the manager device receives an historical information  
11 request for transmission of historical information stored  
12 by the management device, and transmits the received  
13 historical information request to the management device, and  
14 the management device receives the historical  
15 information request from the manager device, reads the stored  
16 historical information and transmits the read historical  
17 information to the manager device.

1 6. A portable recording medium storing an encrypted content  
2 to be played by a playback device using a decryption key  
3 acquired from a management device, wherein

4 the management device holds the decryption key of the  
5 encrypted content, and

6 the recording medium stores the encrypted content  
7 encrypted using an encryption key, and a key request program  
8 for requesting the management device for the decryption key.

1 7. A management device that holds a decryption key for  
2 decrypting an encrypted content stored on a portable  
3 recording medium and transmits the decryption key to a  
4 playback device, the recording medium storing the encrypted  
5 content encrypted using an encryption key and a key request

6 program for requesting the management device for the  
7 decryption key, comprising:

8 a key storage unit storing the decryption key;

9 a disclosure information storage unit storing  
10 disclosure information relating to disclosure of the  
11 encrypted content;

12 a disclosure judging unit operable to receive a request  
13 from the playback device, and to refer to the disclosure  
14 information and judge whether disclosure of the encrypted  
15 content is permitted; and

16 a key transmitting unit operable, if judged that  
17 disclosure is permitted, to transmit the decryption key to  
18 the playback device.

1 8. The management device of claim 7, wherein

2 the disclosure information storage unit stores, as  
3 disclosure information, period information showing at least  
4 one of a disclosure start date and a disclosure end date.

1 9. The management device of claim 8, wherein

2 the disclosure information storage unit stores period  
3 information that includes a user identifier uniquely  
4 identifying a user using the playback device, and relates  
5 to disclosure of the encrypted content to the user identified

6 by the user identifier, and

7 the disclosure judging unit, on receipt from the  
8 playback device of a request that includes the user  
9 identifier, judges using the period information whether  
10 disclosure of the encrypted content is permitted to the user  
11 identified by the user identifier.

1 10. The management device of claim 9, wherein

2 the recording medium stores a plurality of encrypted  
3 contents in correspondence with content identifiers uniquely  
4 identifying individual encrypted contents, each of which has  
5 been encrypted using a different encryption key,

6 the disclosure information storage unit stores a piece  
7 of the period information for each of the encrypted contents,  
8 and

9 the disclosure judging unit, on receipt from the  
10 playback device of the request that includes the user  
11 identifier and a content identifier, judges using the period  
12 information whether disclosure of an encrypted content  
13 identified by the content identifier is permitted to the user  
14 identified by the user identifier.

1 11. The management device of claim 10, wherein

2 the disclosure information storage unit further stores

3 content information and user information, the content  
4 information including, for each encrypted content, at least  
5 one of a secrecy classification showing a secrecy of the  
6 encrypted content and a field showing a substance of the  
7 encrypted content, and the user information including at  
8 least one of a useable classification, a useable count number  
9 and a useable field of the user, and

10 the disclosure judging unit judges whether disclosure  
11 of the encrypted content is permitted to the user, by  
12 referring to the period information, the content information,  
13 and the user information.

1 12. The management device of claim 7, further comprising:

2 an update reception unit operable to receive update  
3 information for use in updating the period information; and

4 an update unit operable to update the period  
5 information according to the received update information.

1 13. The management device of claim 7, further comprising:

2 an historical information generation unit operable, on  
3 receipt of a request from the playback device, to generate  
4 historical information that includes a user identifier which  
5 uniquely identifies a user using the playback device, and  
6 a content identifier which uniquely identifies the encrypted

7 content; and

8 an historical information storage unit that stores the  
9 generated historical information.

1 14. A playback device that plays an encrypted content stored  
2 on a portable recording medium, using a decryption key  
3 acquired from a management device, wherein

4 the recording medium stores the encrypted content  
5 encrypted using an encryption key, and a key request program  
6 for requesting the management device for the decryption key,  
7 and

8 the playback device reads from the recording medium and  
9 executes the key request program, and on receipt of the  
10 decryption key from the management device, reads from the  
11 recording medium and decrypts the encrypted content, and  
12 plays the decrypted content.

1 15. A contents management method used by a contents  
2 management system that includes (i) a management device which  
3 holds a decryption key for decrypting an encrypted content  
4 in correspondence with disclosure information showing  
5 whether disclosure of the encrypted content is permitted,  
6 and (ii) a portable recording medium which stores the  
7 encrypted content and a key request program for requesting



8 the management device for the decryption key, comprising the  
9 steps of:  
10 reading from the recording medium and executing the key  
11 request program;  
12 referring to the disclosure information and judging,  
13 when a request is received from a playback device, whether  
14 disclosure of the encrypted content is permitted, and  
15 transferring the decryption key to the playback device if  
16 judged that disclosure is permitted; and  
17 receiving the decryption key from the management device,  
18 reading from the recording medium and decrypting the  
19 encrypted content using the decryption key, and playing the  
20 decrypted content.

1 16. A contents management program used by a contents  
2 management system that includes (i) a management device which  
3 holds a decryption key for decrypting an encrypted content  
4 in correspondence with disclosure information showing  
5 whether disclosure of the encrypted content is permitted,  
6 and (ii) a portable recording medium which stores the  
7 encrypted content and a key request program for requesting  
8 the management device for the decryption key, comprising the  
9 steps of:  
10 reading from the recording medium and executing the key

11 request program;

12       referring to the disclosure information and judging,  
13 when a request is received from a playback device, whether  
14 disclosure of the encrypted content is permitted, and  
15 transferring the decryption key to the playback device if  
16 judged that disclosure is permitted; and

17       receiving the decryption key from the management device,  
18 reading from the recording medium and decrypting the  
19 encrypted content using the decryption key, and playing the  
20 decrypted content.

1 17. A computer-readable recording medium storing a contents  
2 management program used by a contents management system that  
3 includes (i) a management device which holds a decryption  
4 key for decrypting an encrypted content in correspondence  
5 with disclosure information showing whether disclosure of  
6 the encrypted content is permitted, and (ii) a portable  
7 recording medium which stores the encrypted content and a  
8 key request program for requesting the management device for  
9 the decryption key, the contents management program  
10 including the steps of:

11       reading from the recording medium and executing the key  
12 request program;

13       referring to the disclosure information and judging,

14 when a request is received from a playback device, whether  
15 disclosure of the encrypted content is permitted, and  
16 transferring the decryption key to the playback device if  
17 judged that disclosure is permitted; and  
18 receiving the decryption key from the management device,  
19 reading from the recording medium and decrypting the  
20 encrypted content using the decryption key, and playing the  
21 decrypted content.